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ABSTRACT

This manual describes the buddy skills training program, which provides teachers with a set of tested strategies designed to facilitate interactions and support the development of friendships between preschoolers with and without disabilities. The training procedures are philosophically based on social exchange theory. To support the concept of positive reciprocity and a shared responsibility for the developing relationship, buddy skills are taught to both members of a buddy pair. Features of the program include: (1) peer sensitization, designed to promote positive attitudes as well as prosocial behavior; (2) a versatile, across-the-day application, providing increased opportunities for interactions to occur and relationships to develop; (3) developmentally appropriate strategies that place a low demand on children; and (4) minimal use of adult prompting. In addition, training procedures take place within the regular curriculum, and because of the across-the-day implementation, there is less need to program for generalization. The manual provides an overview of the training sequence and describes the steps of the program. For each step, teachers are provided objectives, rationale, strategies, and a self-check. Sample forms for evaluating student progress and a case study of a 4-year-old with Down syndrome are also provided. (Contains 26 references.) (CR)

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Teaching Buddy Skills to Preschoolers

Kris Ehrlich, Karin Shafer,

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Research Foundations

The information in this book is based primarily on the following research. See the bibliography for complete citations.

"Interaction Among Preschoolers With and Without Disabilities: Effects of Across-the-Day Peer Intervention"
by H. Goldstein, K. English, K. Shafer, & E. Kaczmarek

"Promoting Interactions Among Preschoolers With and Without Disabilities: Effects of a Buddy Skills Training Program"
by K. English, H. Goldstein, K. Shafer, & E. Kaczmarek

"Peer-Mediated Intervention: Attending to, Commenting on, and Acknowledging the Behavior of Preschoolers With Autism"
by H. Goldstein, E. Kaczmarek, K. Pennington, & K. Shafer

"A Peer-Mediated Social Network Intervention to Enhance the Social Integration of Persons With Moderate and Severe Disabilities"
by T. Haring & L. Breen

"Acceptability, Feasibility, and Current Use of Social Interaction Interventions for Preschool Children With Disabilities"
by S. Odom, S. McConnell, & L. A. Chandler

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Teaching Buddy Skills to Preschoolers

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A child with a disability wants to have friends at school. But developing friendships usually requires some intervention.

When fully realized in educational settings, inclusion means that all students have equal access not only to programs or materials, but also to all the normative experiences of childhood. One of the most essential of these experiences is the social aspect of school—the opportunity to share, play, laugh with, and learn from one's peers. The value of these relationships should not be underestimated. From an adult's point of view, preschool friendships may seem to have only peripheral value; from a child's point of view, friendships are very important. Ask a well-adjusted preschooler why she likes school, and she will not say that the curriculum is developmentally appropriate or the materials are challenging; she will probably comment on the friends she has there. And specialists in early intervention indicate that establishing peer relationships is a vital developmental task.

> Child-child interaction changes over time, from a "primitive awareness of the needs of others" to complex reciprocal exchanges using "multiple sources of information. Children spend more and more time in peer interaction until, by adolescence, time spent with peers exceeds time spent with other agents of socialization."
>
> — Hartup (1983)

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This buddy skills training program is based on the assumption that a child with a disability wants to have friends at school. But developing friendships usually requires some intervention, because (1) a child with a disability may not know how to interact and be friends with other children; (2) typically developing children may not know how to interact and be friends with a child with a disability; (3) teachers may have little experience in promoting friendships among children with and without disabilities.

Guralnick (1990) described these patterns among children with disabilities: (1) difficulties engaging in group play; (2) lack of success in forming reciprocal friendships; (3) lower sociometric status compared to typically developing children.

Facilitating Friendship Development

By definition friendships are relationships that are mutually enjoyed by each participant. The buddy skills training procedure is based on the premise that while children with disabilities and children without disabilities have differing friendship skills, all children should still be expected to share mutual responsibility for the development of a friendship.

To promote the development of friendships among children with a wide variety of social skills, the developers of this training procedure applied the concepts of "social exchange theory," which proposes that for satisfactory outcomes in relationships to occur, the rewards of interactions must outweigh the cost for each participant.

Gaventa (1993) described three basic elements of friendship as conveyed in classic literature: (1) friends enjoy each other's company; (2) friends are useful to each other (reciprocity); (3) friends support a common commitment to "the good"— a good life.

This buddy skills intervention attempts to *increase the rewards and reduce the costs* of social interactions. Learning and practicing buddy skills can help children with and without disabilities develop confidence and enjoy their interactions (increasing rewards); sensitizing children to different levels of communicative abilities and play behaviors can ease anxiety or clarify misunderstandings (decreasing costs). The greater the benefits associated with interactions, the greater the possibility for a friendship to develop.

The training procedures described in this manual, then, are philosophically based on social exchange theory. To support the concepts of positive reciprocity and a shared responsibility for the developing relationship, buddy skills are taught to both members of a buddy pair. Buddy skills are practiced in several activities across the school day to help the buddy pair learn to generalize to different situations.

Kelly and Thibaut (1978) suggested that relationship development was affected by **rewards** (factors that reinforce behaviors, such as enjoyment, satisfaction, or task completion) and **costs** (factors that inhibit behavior, such as embarrassment, anxiety, or excessive effort).

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Both rewards (positive reinforcement and satisfying relationships) and costs (training and practice) are shared by children with and without disabilities.

Features of the Buddy Skills Training Procedures

Buddy skills training procedures have some important and perhaps unique features, including: (1) peer sensitization, designed to promote positive attitudes as well as prosocial behavior; (2) a versatile, across-the-day application, providing increased opportunities for interactions to occur and relationships to develop; (3) developmentally appropriate strategies that place a low demand on children; and (4) minimal use of adult prompting. In addition, training procedures take place within the regular curriculum, and because of the across-the-day implementation, there is less need to program for generalization.

Goldstein, English, Shafer, and Kaczmarek (in press) asked trained buddies to apply their "buddy steps" across three activities during the day rather than during one period of intense strategy use. This approach seemed to reduce the demand or "costs" of peer cooperation and resulted in generalized effects when children were paired with new buddies.

Conclusion

This buddy skills training procedure was designed to support the goal of friendship development in integrated preschool settings. Educators will learn a relatively simple set of steps to facilitate friendships among children with and without disabilities.

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CHAPTER TWO

uidelines

This cycle of buddy training is repeated until the teacher concludes that both members of the buddy pair have learned... to play and share in a way that is mutually enjoyable.

Overview of Training Sequence

To follow the training sequence, a set of definitions is required. Typically developing children, who receive the first component of training, are referred to as "trained buddies." Children with disabilities, who later receive joint training with trained buddies, are identified as "buddy partners."

As a teacher you will want to conduct an initial assessment of social interactions in the preschool classroom (step 1) and then begin the buddy skills training with a pretraining/sensitization lesson (step 2). Conduct the actual buddy training (step 3), which consists of three buddy steps (stay, play, talk). Then pair a trained buddy to use the buddy steps with a child with a disability in at least three activities across the day (step 4). Provide reminders and positive reinforcement (step 5) and evaluate the effectiveness of the training (step 6). Typically, the first few evaluations suggest that the social interactions are not yet mutually satisfactory (step 7). If this is the case, identify a social skill that will help both the trained buddy and the buddy partner interact (step 8). Add this new skill to the original three buddy steps to support the development of a common repertoire of social skills for the buddy pair, who from this point on are trained together (step 9). Buddy pairs again use their new skills

across the day (repeat step 4), supported by reminders and reinforcers (repeat step 5). The teacher evaluates the effectiveness of the training (repeat step 6).

This cycle of buddy training is repeated until the teacher concludes from the evaluation that both members of the buddy pair have learned to understand each other's communication styles and are able to play and share in a way that is mutually enjoyable (step 10). Once you determine that buddy interactions are satisfactory, you may phase out the use of reminders and reinforcers (step 11).

Figure 1.1 presents a flowchart of the training sequence. An overview of the training sequence is followed by specific guidelines for each step.

Figure 1.1

Flowchart of Buddy Skills Training Program

Step 1: Initial Assessment

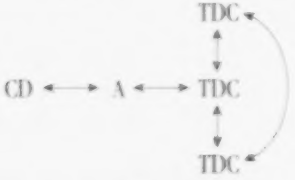
Objectives

Teachers will obtain objective information to determine the extent to which a child with a disability socially interacts in the classroom. This preliminary information will provide answers to the following questions: (1) How often does a child with a disability interact with other children, compared to typically developing classmates? (2) How often does the child with a disability interact with adults, compared to typically developing classmates?

Rationale

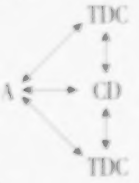
Without intervention, social interactions are typically observed as follows: (1) A child with a disability interacts very infrequently with other children, compared to typically developing classmates. (2) A child with a disability interacts very frequently with adults in comparison to typically developing classmates.

The interactions may be depicted as follows (A = adult, CD = child with disability, TDC = typically developing classmates):



The purpose of the buddy skills training program is to provide preschool children social strategies to alter interactions in the following ways: (1) A child with a disability will interact more frequently with classmates. (2) A child with a disability will interact less frequently with adults (to allow for an increase in social opportunities with classmates). (3) Typically developing classmates will interact with a child with a disability to the same extent as they would with other children.

The pattern of interactions would then be depicted as follows:



Strategies

We suggest you use a tracking system to conduct the initial assessment. Observe for short periods (for example, for 4 minutes) during different daily activities to count the number of social interactions of a particular child with a disability and of typically developing children.

Our recommended assessment strategy requires time to observe and record social behaviors. These observations can be conducted by an educator, classroom aide, parent, or other classroom volunteer.

Figure 2 can be used to record the number of social interactions of children and adults in an integrated preschool. Figure 2 is designed to record interactions for all participants before and after buddy training. With this generic form it is important to circle "pre" or "post," as applicable. Note that the subject is the child being tracked.

An interaction is any social or communicative behavior, either verbal or nonverbal. Examples include: making a comment, asking or answering a question, touching an arm to gain attention, handing a toy or accepting a toy, pulling on a sleeve, and laughing. Collect samples of social interactions in 3- or 4-minute segments. Use one form for each sample.

Figure 2

Tracking Social Interaction

Child's name (subject): _____ Date: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Check one: ❑ Pre ❑ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: _____

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.

S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC
S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC
S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC	TDC

Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)

Subject	_____	(count the "S"s circled)
Adult	_____	(count the "A"s circled)
Child w/Disabilities	_____	(count the "CD"s circled)
Typ. Dev. Child	_____	(count the "TDC"s circled)

Comments:

Figure 3

Tracking Social Interaction: Example (MG)

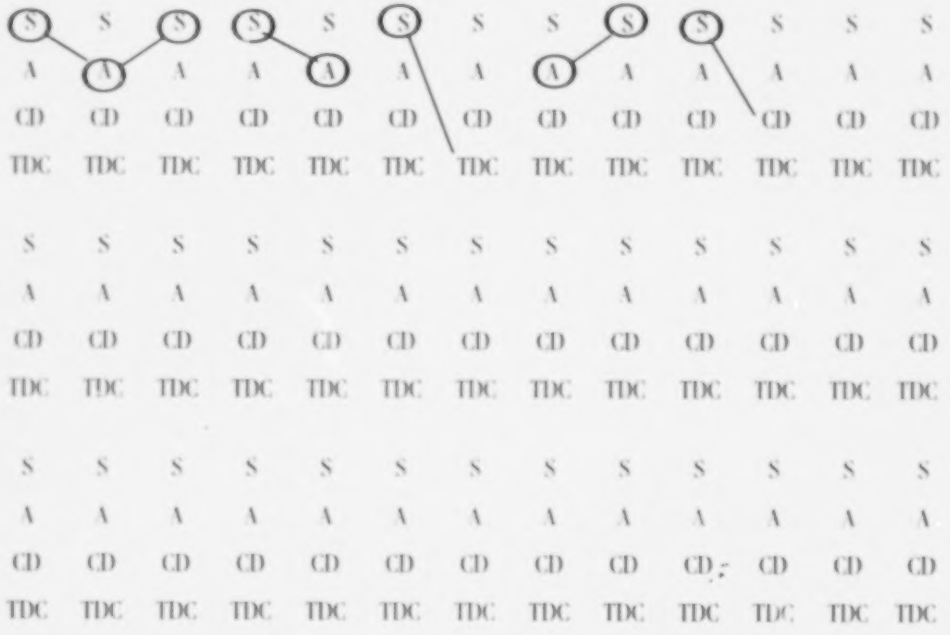
Child's name (subject): MG Date: 4/6 Length of Observation: 4 min.

Check one: ☑ Pre ☐ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: 11:00 am

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.



Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)			
	Subject	6	(count the "S"s circled)
	Adult	3	(count the "A"s circled)
	Child w/Disabilities	0	(count the "CD"s circled)
	Typ. Dev. Child	0	(count the "TDC"s circled)

Comments: MG observed other children & was interested in their play, but when she called a child's name, she did not make eye contact, & the classmate did not notice her attempt.

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Figure 3 is a completed Tracking Social Interaction form for a child with a disability (S = subject). In this example, the observer noted that, in this 4-minute time frame, the subject interacted with other people six times, four times with an adult (A), and once with a typically developing child (TDC), and once with another child with a disability (CD). Each time the subject initiated a verbal or nonverbal interaction to an adult, "S" was circled, and a line drawn to an "A" (adult). When the adult responded (verbally or nonverbally), an "A" was circled. (A circled letter indicates that this person initiated contact with or actively responded to another person.) Although the subject initiated an interaction to a typically developing child (TDC) and another child with a disability (CD), those children did not respond (note the lack of a circle). A break in a set of connected lines indicates that some time elapsed, and a new set of interactions began.

The length of interactions can be measured by counting the number of lines that connect each exchange. Observers are encouraged to describe the interactions in the Comments section, to help analyze the nature of a CD's communicative intent and obstacles and set teaching goals. For example, a child with a disability may initiate with classmates frequently but unsuccessfully, perhaps because of a soft voice, lack of eye contact, or a style that is too aggressive. Or a child with a disability may respond to an initiation only when it is accompanied by a tactile cue; for this situation, teaching goals may include showing a typically developing child how to use tactile cues and training the child with a disability to respond to auditory cues.

We suggest you also collect interaction samples of the children who will receive the first component of the buddy skills training. We recommend that the observer collect several 4-minute samples from a variety of activities to obtain a fair representation of the interactions occurring in the classroom. (When tracking a typically developing child, that child is identified as the subject.) These samples then can be averaged to provide an indication of the overall social interactions in the classroom. Your specific goals for buddy skills training are taken from these data. In general, your goals should be (1) to increase the number and/or length of the interactions of the child with a disability, and (2) to encourage trained buddies to interact with their buddy partners at the approximate level at which they interact with other typically developing children.

Summary

Conducting an initial assessment serves two purposes: (1) to provide information regarding the number of social interactions of the children with and without disabilities, and (2) to determine an appropriate goal (i.e., number of interactions) for the children who will be matched as buddies.

Alternative Assessment Strategy

Conducting an initial assessment as described above is strongly recommended to help the teacher set goals for the buddy training. However, circumstances do not always allow for this preliminary step, especially when there is a shortage of available adults. (Assessments should be conducted by an observer while class is progressing as usual.)

The teacher may need to rely on past research to establish an initial training goal for the buddy pair. We have found that an average of five to eight interactions per 5-minute session is a reasonable starting goal in buddy training.

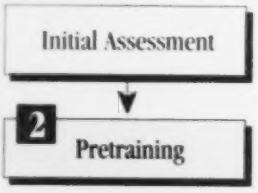
Self Check

We encourage readers to stop here and check your understanding of the following questions:

1. Without intervention, what types of social interactions are typically observed among adults, typically developing children, and children with disabilities?
2. What is the value of conducting an initial assessment of social interactions in the classroom?

Figure 1.2

Step 2



Step 2: Pretraining

Once you have completed the initial assessment of social interactions in the classroom, you are ready to conduct a pretraining unit.

Objectives

Teachers will conduct a two-session pretraining unit that will sensitize all students in the classroom to many types of communication abilities and their effects on socialization. Teachers will lead discussions on three topics: (1) different ways children in their class might communicate; (2) different ways to respond to these communication attempts; and (3) the concepts of "friendship" and "being a buddy."

Students will learn that fellow classmates possess a wide variety of communicative and social skills. Students will learn how to recognize the intention of some communicative attempts typically seen in their classroom.

Rationale

Children often fail to notice or sometimes misinterpret the communicative or play attempts of a child with a disability. *Sensitization* will increase preschoolers' recognition and understanding of these communicative attempts. An awareness of individual styles of communication is a prerequisite to learning subsequent buddy skills.

Strategy, Session 1: Different Ways of Communicating

Recommended Preparation

The teacher, a classroom aide, or a volunteer can videotape communicative attempts typical among classmates. With parents' written consent, teachers can use videotaped samples of classmates with and without disabilities at play to help children focus on, recognize, and interpret the intended meaning of subtle or ambiguous communicative acts. After videotaping, teachers will want to review tapes and identify by index number five or six behaviors that will most likely stimulate discussion.

A Sample Session 1

The teachers and children view a 2-minute videotape of a 4-year-old girl sitting at a table. They observe the following: (1) She tries three times to get the attention of children walking by. But her speech is not clear and she is ignored. (2) She gets up and pulls on the hand of an adult, leading the adult to the table. (3) She points to a disassembled puzzle on the table.

The teacher asks the students: What did the girl want? How did she try to get what she wanted? How did she tell other children? Why didn't other children answer her? How did she tell the adult what she wanted without using words?

After that sample is considered, the teacher advances the tape to another segment of a classmate who throws a toy after trying unsuccessfully to participate in a play interaction. The same kinds of questions are asked. Each segment is discussed in the same manner.

Alternative Video Strategy

If videotaping in class is not an option, the teacher can show a supplemental videotape prepared by the authors. This tape consists of 10 2-minute samples of children with disabilities and includes a set of suggested questions for discussion. To order this video, contact author Dr. Howard Goldstein, Department of Communication Disorders, Regional Rehabilitation Center, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2007.

Alternative Role-Playing Strategy

If video playing is not an option, the teacher might role play some of the communicative and play behaviors observed in the classroom.

For example, the teacher might emulate the communication efforts of the child described above or of a specific child in class. The behaviors can be acted out with another adult or with a student, and then discussed as indicated above.

Session Conclusion

Session 1 ends with positive reinforcement (praise or stickers) for the students for learning to recognize the different ways their classmates may try to communicate and play with them.

Strategy, Session 2: Different Ways of Responding; Being a Buddy

A Sample Session 2

Briefly review main points of the previous session. After discussing how children use different abilities to communicate, lead discussion toward helpful ways to respond appropriately. The teacher asks the students:

- What should we do if we can't understand what our buddy is saying?
- Show me how you can ask a buddy to say something again.
- What does it mean if a buddy reaches for a toy? Show me how to ask a buddy to "say it slower."
- What questions will help you understand what your buddy wants? (For example, the classmate might be encouraged to ask, "Do you want this truck? Do you want to share this book with me?" Responses to such questions from a child with a disability may be delayed or unclear. Children may need to discuss the purpose of taking extra time to understand or to figure out how to answer.)

In the conclusion of this pretraining session, the teacher stresses that trying to understand what someone wants is part of being a good buddy. Take time to discuss what the concepts of "friendship" and "being a buddy" mean to the children. For example, the teacher may ask, "Tell me what a friend is. Is a friend the same thing as a buddy? Do buddies help each other? Play together? Is it a good feeling to be a friend or buddy? How would you want a friend to play with you, make you feel?"

Session Conclusion

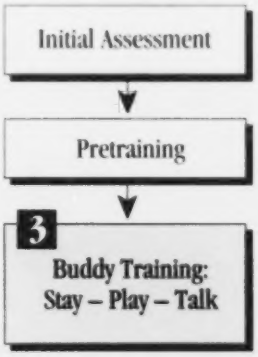
Close the session by telling the students that they will soon be asked to learn easy buddy steps. Their cooperation will be important to the class.

Self Check

1. What is the goal of a pretraining "sensitization" session?
2. What are the three topics addressed in the pretraining session?
3. How can videotapes and/or role-playing help children recognize different communicative and social behaviors?
4. What kind of questions will lead children to consider the intent of nonverbal or ambiguous verbal communicative attempts?

Figure 1.3

Step 3



Step 3: Buddy Training

Objectives

Teachers will teach children to interact using three "buddy steps" designed to promote positive social interactions among classmates. The buddy steps form a set of interactive strategies requiring students to: (1) *stay* with their friend; (2) *play* with their friend; and (3) *talk* with their friend. Teachers will guide students through two training sessions. Teachers will monitor progress during training to determine the students' ability to use the buddy steps.

Students will learn buddy skills through a set of training and practice sessions that incorporate direct instruction, teacher modeling, peer modeling, and guided practice with a classmate. Students will be expected to show mastery of buddy steps, using the buddy steps with a child with disabilities.

Rationale

Even when sensitized to the communicative or play attempts of children with disabilities, classmates most likely do not know what to do next. Providing classmates with a set of general social-skill strategies (buddy steps) will encourage them to initiate and maintain interactions necessary for the development of relationships with children with disabilities.

Strategy

Training should be conducted in an area where the children can move around and practice the strategies without distraction. Needed materials include: table toys, snack items, and other items frequently used in the classroom (crayons, puzzles, etc.). The following set of sample scripts conveys the content of the training. Phrases printed in bold print indicate the responses expected from students.

Note that this stage of buddy skills training is for typically developing children; children with disabilities receive training at step 9, explained later.

Lesson 1

Lesson 1 teaches two buddy steps: (1) to stay with your friend and (2) to play with your friend.

Teacher Script

"Today we are going to talk about being a good buddy. The last time we talked about being a buddy, we watched videotapes together. We saw children trying to get the attention of a friend or a teacher. Some of the children were trying to play with somebody in their class, but nobody was watching them or helping them to get what they needed.

"Those children in the tape needed a buddy! They needed a friend who would play with them. For the next few days we are going to talk about the kinds of things that *you* can do that will make it easy for you to be a good buddy with someone in our class.

"The first step to being a good buddy is to *stay with your friend.* To do this you have to see where your buddy is and pay attention to what your buddy is doing. So the first thing to remember is to stay with your friend.

"What is the first thing you do when you're a buddy?" **Stay with your friend.**

"When you stay with your buddy, you will want to say something. Usually friends say, 'Hi,' or 'Can I play with you?' Saying something lets your friend know you want to be buddies.

"Now let's talk about the kinds of things you can say to your buddy. Remember, you want to pay attention to your buddy and you want to help your buddy pay attention to you, so what kinds of things do you think would be good to say to your buddy?"

Let the children think of possibilities and then add suggestions. Examples:

- **"Hi."**
- **The friend's name**
- **"Good morning."**
- **"Can I play with you?"**
- **"What are you doing?"**
- **"That looks like fun. You're making a puzzle."**

"When you stay *with your buddy,* that means joining them where they are playing, and moving with them if they move. Suppose you are asked to be someone's buddy; you see your buddy playing with blocks, and you are in the kitchen. What do you think you should do?" **Go and stay with your friend.**

"That's right, wherever your friend goes, that's where you should go. So if your friend moves to the blocks, what should you do?" **Move to the blocks.**

"A good buddy stays with the friend even when that friend moves around to different toys.

"Okay, we said that the first step to being a good buddy is: **Stay with your friend.** Now we are going to talk a little bit about what to do next. The best way to let your friend know you want to be buddies is to *play* with him or her. So first you *stay with your friend* and then you *play with your friend.*

"Let's say the 'buddy steps' together:"

- **Stay with your friend.**
- **Play with your friend.**

"What are some ways we play with a buddy?" *Guide answers along these lines:*

- **Share, use the same toys.**
- **Take turns.**
- **Bring a toy over.**
- **Ask a buddy to play with you.**

"Now we are going to practice being a good buddy. First you will watch me. Then you will get a turn to practice."

Role Play

The teacher models the first two buddy steps with another adult, if possible, or with one of the children. As a model, an adult will role-play a child with low-level communication skills who moves from one activity to another.

Give each child at least two chances to practice the "stay and play" steps. "Play" here implies all age-appropriate engagement of materials or participation in activities. For this practice session, the buddy should be an adult who is role-playing a child with low-level communication skills. Encourage the children to say something different to introduce themselves each time they take a practice turn. After each turn, talk about what the child did correctly; if improvements need to be made, encourage the student to think of what to do next. If he or she is unable to respond, ask the other students to help with suggestions. In this example, Martina remembers to "stay" but can't seem to think of anything to do to get her friend's attention:

"Martina, I really liked the way you moved to be with your buddy, but you need to do something so she knows you're paying attention and would like to play with her. Can you think of something to do?" **No response.**

"Okay, let's help Martina think of some things to do."

Allow children to make suggestions (touch child's arm, smile, ask for a toy, comment on toys) and then give Martina another chance to practice.

Charting Student Progress

The teacher can keep a record of each child's progress using the recording sheet shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Student Progress Chart, Lesson 1

Child's Name	Session #1: stay	play	Session #2: stay	play	Session #3: stay	play
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Directions: Use a check to indicate that the child has used two buddy steps for 3 minutes correctly without prompting. **Goal:** two consecutive checks for each child.

"You all worked hard at being a good buddy today. Before we finish, tell me the buddy steps we learned today: **Stay with your friend, and play with your friend.**

"Yes, *stay and play*. The next time we are together we will talk more about being a good buddy and have the chance to practice again. Good work, everybody."

Lesson 2

In lesson 2, a third step is added to the two buddy steps learned in lesson 1. In lesson 2, children learn to *talk* as well as stay and play with their buddies. Children will be encouraged to talk about toys, describe what they and their buddies are doing with toys, or about activities occurring in the classroom.

Teacher's Script

"The last time we talked about being a good buddy, we talked about two buddy steps. Let's say them together: **Stay with your friend, and play with your friend.** That's right, *stay and play*. When you are asked to be a buddy, what kinds of things can you first say to your friend?"

Answers should be attention-getting introductions as from the previous lesson:

- **"Hi."**
- **Your friend's name**
- **"What are you doing?"**
- **"Let's play cars together."**

"That's right, you remembered. Now, how do you *play* with a friend?"

Answers again should be similar to the previous discussion:

- **Share, play with the same toys.**
- **Take turns.**
- **Bring a toy over.**

"Now, there's one more step to being a buddy and that is to *talk with your friend*. This step is really important because your friend may not talk a lot. It will help your buddy when you play with him or her. *(The teacher lays out some toys.)*

"I want you to look at these toys and think of some things you could say about them."

Pick a toy and allow each child to say one thing about that toy; for example, describe its attributes, such as its color, its uses, and things you can do with it. For example, choose a car and begin to play with it.

"Martina, what can you tell me about this car?"

It's red.

"That's right, it's red. What else about this car, Bill?"

I have one of those at home. It goes really fast.

"So we can say the car is red, and fast. What else, Marcus?"

You're pushing it backwards.

"It goes both ways, right? That's a good thing to say about the car."

Continue practice talking about materials and activities. Use a variety of toys to simulate snack time and other activities, so that students will see that the steps may be generalized to a variety of activities across the day.

"We have learned three buddy steps all together. They were: Stay with your friend, play with your friend, and talk with your friend. Let's just say it this way: Stay, play, and talk with your friend. Now, you tell me the buddy steps." **Stay, play, and talk with your friend.**

Role Play

The teacher gives each child a turn to practice all three steps with an adult who is once again role-

playing a child with limited communication skills. Encourage the children to talk a lot and to say a variety of things. Also encourage the children watching in the group to pay close attention to the steps and to offer suggestions about things to talk about. Instruct the children that when they are given a signal (a "thumb's up" or "okay" sign), their buddy time is up. They can then choose to stay or select another activity.

Charting Student Progress

The teacher can keep a record of each child's progress with the Figure-5 recording sheet, similar to the recording sheet for lesson 1 with the addition of the third "talk" step. When a child has used the three steps of the buddy skills two times in a row for 3 minutes without prompting or intervention from the adult, he or she is ready to use the three buddy steps with a child with a disability.

Conclusion

"Today we learned that the last buddy step is to talk to your buddy. Together the three steps are stay, play, and talk with your friend. Tell me the three buddy steps: **Stay, play, and talk with your friend.** You all worked hard again today, and this is the last time we're going to be in a group like this because it's time to practice your buddy steps with friends in the classroom. Before we finish, let's say the buddy steps one more time: **Stay, play, and talk with your friend.** Good job!"

Buddy Assignments

As you transition from training into implementation, we recommend that the buddy assignments (a child with a disability and a typically developing child) be daily and long-term rather than intermittent or short-term. Relationships require time to develop, and too-brief or too-inconsistent

Figure 5

Student Progress Chart, Lesson 2

Child's Name	Session #1:			Session #2:			Session #3:		
	stay	play	talk	stay	play	talk	stay	play	talk
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									

Directions: Use a check to indicate that the child has used three buddy steps correctly without prompting. **Goal:** two consecutive checks for each child.

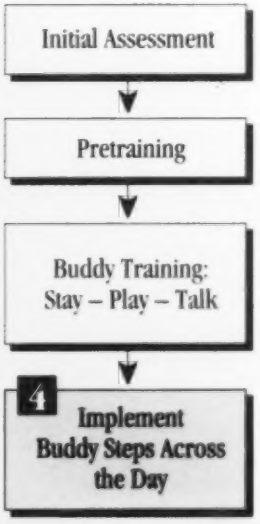
assignments do not allow buddy pairs to get to know each other well. Same-gender pairing is also recommended as a normative practice among preschoolers. Child characteristics to consider in trained buddies (typically developing children) are social maturity and ability to empathize.

Self Check

1. What are the three buddy steps?
2. How can the three buddy steps increase interaction between children with and without disabilities?
3. What kinds of materials will you need to practice the application of the three buddy steps across the school day in your classroom?

Figure 1.4

Step 4



Step 4: Implement Buddy Steps

Objectives

Teachers will identify at least three activities throughout the day in which to encourage the practice of buddy steps (for example, free play, snack, and a structured small-group activity).

Students will practice the three buddy steps (stay, play, talk) in the context of a variety of activities with a buddy partner.

Rationale

It would not be appropriate to suggest to children that "being a buddy" is an expectation for one specified time of the day. Nor is it appropriate to suggest that two children stay with each other all day, not seeking out other friends. Practicing buddy steps several times a day provides increased opportunity for a buddy pair to get to know each other's communicative intents. Practicing buddy steps in a variety of settings across the day helps children learn to generalize to other activities as well.

Strategies

After children have learned the three buddy steps (stay, play, talk) they will be asked to be someone's buddy in the classroom. Assigned buddy partners are asked to practice these steps in the classroom within the context of everyday activities.

Most preschool activities are conducive to sharing, talking, and interaction. To promote buddy interactions across the day, the teacher should identify at least three such activities that provide a supportive context for practicing the three buddy steps.

At the beginning of the day, the teacher informs a trained buddy (a typically developing child) that he or she will be a buddy with a child

with a disability (his or her buddy partner). Briefly review the three buddy steps, and ask if the child can think of some ways to use them in the upcoming activity.

For example: "Good morning, Jeremiah. In a couple minutes it will be time to be a buddy with Kim. Do you remember the three buddy steps we talked about? They were 'stay, play, talk.' *(Expand as needed.)* Right now it's free play time, and Kim is at the table, but there are no toys there. What will you do first? What can you talk about? I'll be watching to see how it goes. I'll give you an 'okay' sign when your buddy time is up."

After a few days, this "warm up" speech can be phased out.

Depending on the activity and the ability of the child with a disability to carry a conversation, direction may be needed to help develop ideas on what to talk about. Suggestions include: (1) snack time: color, taste, texture of the food or drink, comparing it to other favorite foods or drinks; the cups, napkins, etc.; (2) art: asking for, sharing the materials; describing the activity of painting, gluing; (3) playtime: talking about the movement of the ball as it rolls between buddies, taking turns shooting baskets and pretending to be Michael Jordan, pushing each other on swings; (4) sociodramatic play: clothing, roles assumed, jobs assigned, planning out the activity; (5) small-group activities: telling stories from books in the reading corner, constructing with blocks and other objects, sensory experiences in science/discovery center; (6) clean-up: location of materials, uses of soap and sponges.

To minimize the demand for cooperation (a "cost" mentioned in chapter 1), give a trained buddy a cue after 3 or 4 minutes to indicate the buddy time is up. At this point, a trained buddy can choose to continue playing with the buddy partner or move to another activity. Teachers can choose to give no signal if children are engaged in activity and the signal might be a disruption.

Self Check

1. Which three activities in your classroom did you identify as conducive to practicing the three buddy steps? Are there more than three?
2. What are the advantages to practicing buddy steps across the day?

Step 5: Reminders and Reinforcements

Objectives

Teachers will provide reminders to trained buddies when encouragement or assistance is needed for initiating and maintaining buddy steps.

Rationale

Although children are given several opportunities to practice the three buddy steps during training, they may need to be reminded or prompted to use them during the first opportunities with a child with a disability (a buddy partner). As trained buddies interact with their buddy partners in the classroom and successfully use the buddy steps, verbal and tangible positive reinforcers should be provided.

Strategies

The teacher provides prompts to encourage and maintain interactions between trained buddies and their buddy partners. Trained buddies will be positively reinforced for using the three buddy steps during the three activities selected by the teacher. As children become more comfortable and proficient at being buddies, prompting will be reduced or discontinued. At first reinforcers are provided at the end of each activity, but they are eventually delayed to occur only at the end of the day.

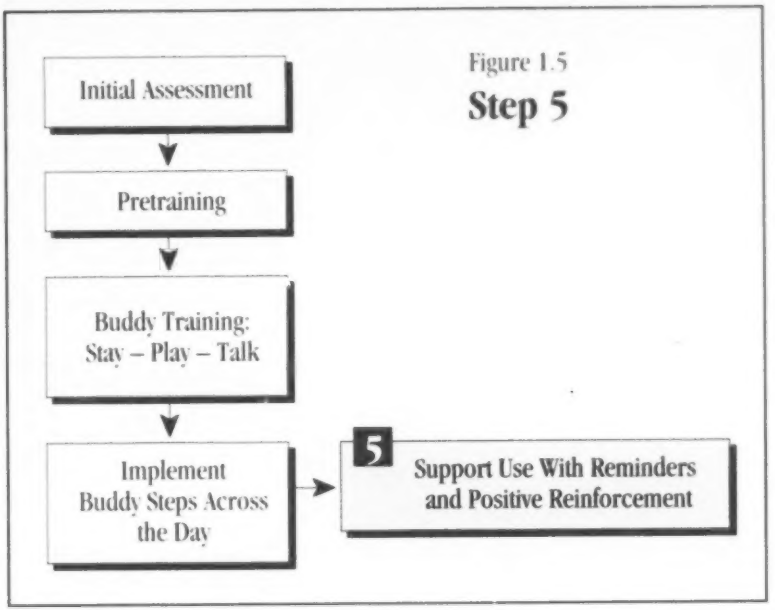


Figure 1.5

Step 5

To help get buddies off to a good start, the teacher should provide a brief reminder of the three buddy steps. It is also helpful to make play or talking suggestions. For example: "Good morning, Marcus. I'm happy you will be Corey's buddy today. Do you remember the three buddy steps? Let's say them together: Stay, play, and talk. Good job. Remember, you will be Corey's buddy several times today so you can start right now. I see him in the sandbox, why don't you go over and play with him there?"

In this instance, morning sandbox play was one of the teacher's three activities selected for observation. When children are first learning to be buddies, the teacher should give them some time (perhaps 2 minutes) before prompting. Sometimes children need a few minutes to decide on what to talk about. If after the first 2 minutes the buddy is still having difficulty using the buddy steps, provide a reminder to stay, play, and talk. If the buddy gets off to a good start but stops talking, or gets involved in his own play, a reminder of just one step may be needed, such as, "Remember to *talk* to your friend." Or the teacher may need to be more specific, such as, "Talk about what you are doing with the sand."

At the end of each activity, the teacher should provide the trained buddy with feedback. If the trained buddy used the buddy steps appropriately and the number of interactions was near the goal (as determined by the data collected in the Initial Assessment), provide positive reinforcement with praise ("Good job! You really know how to be a buddy") and tangible reinforcers (e.g., stickers or stamps on a page).

If the trained buddy did not meet the intended goal, constructive feedback is helpful. ("Jamie, you tried nicely to be Shawna's buddy today. I liked the way you asked her to share the blocks, and she gave you some. Doesn't that make you feel good? Maybe the next time you could remember to talk even more to Shawna—that would make her feel good, too!")

The teacher can provide reminders during all three activities chosen for the day, and provide reinforcements at the end of each activity or at the end of the day. At the end of the day, trained buddies should be given a summary of the "buddy day" regarding what they did well and how they might improve next time.

As typically developing children become more proficient at being trained buddies, and more comfortable with the communication style of their new friends, interactions occur more naturally and the "rewards" of being a buddy and having a new friend are obvious. As this happens, the need for reminders during and reinforcers after each activity should lessen.

Self Check

1. Why is it important to provide trained buddies with reminders and reinforcements during the early buddy interactions?

Step 6: Evaluation

Objectives

Teachers will evaluate the effectiveness of the trained buddy's use of the three buddy steps. Teachers will determine: (1) how the trained buddy is using the buddy steps, and (2) how the child with a disability responds to the buddy's attempts at being a friend.

Rationale

Friendships between children with disabilities and children without disabilities may require a great deal of support and encouragement. Simply teaching buddy steps will usually not ensure mutually satisfying interactions; observation and evaluation of the use of buddy steps is essential in determining the effectiveness of the training. Because of the differences among all children, it is difficult to predict how well trained buddies will implement their new social strategies, and how well their buddy partners will respond to the strategies.

Strategies

The teacher observes and evaluates the quality and quantity of the interaction resulting from the trained buddy's use of the buddy steps.

Observations may consider both the quality and quantity of the social interactions between buddies. The *quantity* of interactions can be recorded on the Tracking Social Interactions form (see Figure 2).

To evaluate the *quality* of interactions between a trained buddy and a child with a

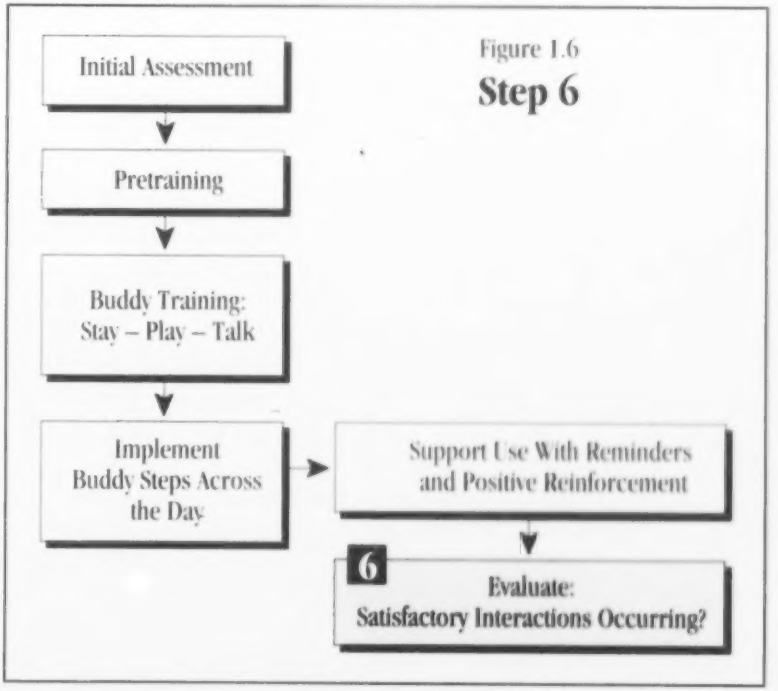


Figure 1.6
Step 6

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disability, the observer (teacher, aide, or volunteer) should make note of the following behaviors at all three activities across the day:

- Does the trained buddy stay near the buddy partner?
- Does the trained buddy initiate interactions appropriately and effectively?
- Does the child with a disability respond to the trained buddy's initiations?
- Does the child with a disability initiate interactions appropriately and effectively with the trained buddy?
- Does the trained buddy respond to the buddy partner's initiations in a socially appropriate manner? If there are few or no initiations or responses by the child with a disability, perhaps the activity is not conducive to sharing, talking, or working/playing together. If that is your determination, ask the trained buddy to try the three buddy steps with another activity. If the original activity is determined to be appropriate, the low number of interactions themselves will need to be addressed.

If the buddy partner is making initiations and responses, are they positive or negative? How would the interactions be described? Do the two children interact, or do they engage in parallel play? Is this developmentally appropriate? Do the two children make eye contact, take turns, share toys, seem to enjoy each other's company? Or is there conflict, resistance, noncompliance, lack of interest?

In the example in Figure 6, the trained buddy (subject) initiated twice, with no response from the child with a disability (CD); then the child with a disability did respond to the third initiation. The trained buddy initiated again, receiving no response from the child with a disability; later, the child with a disability initiated, and the trained buddy responded. Finally, the trained buddy also initiated to another typically developing child (TDC), who responded.

Compare these numbers to the average number of interactions obtained from the Initial Assessment of the trained buddy. This comparison will allow you to determine if the number of interactions between the trained buddy and child with a disability is approaching that of the trained buddy with other classmates.

To obtain a fairly accurate overall impression of the quality and quantity of interactions, observations should be conducted for two or three days, at all three activities.

When both the quality and quantity of buddy-pair interactions have been considered, the teacher then decides whether the interactions are satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If satisfactory, the teacher proceeds to training step 10. If not yet satisfactory, the teacher continues on to training step 7.

Self Check

1. How will you use the information collected from your evaluation observations?

Step 7: Identify Behaviors Inhibiting Interaction

Objectives

Teachers will recognize when interactions are not satisfactory. Teachers will identify a social or communicative behavior that prevents or inhibits a satisfactory interaction between a trained buddy and a target child.

Rationale

When first using the three buddy steps, many children have difficulty generalizing to different

Figure 6

Tracking Social Interaction: Example (LKD)

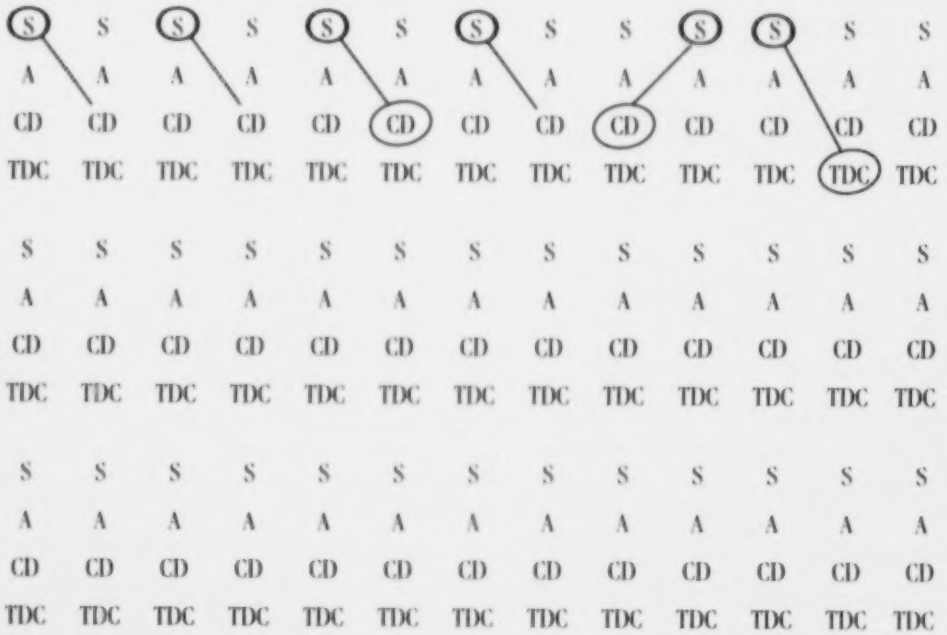
Child's name (subject): LKD (trained buddy) Date: 9/6 Length of Observation: 4 min.

Check one: ☐ Pre ☑ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: 9:00 am

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.



Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)			
	Subject	6	(count the "S"s circled)
	Adult	0	(count the "A"s circled)
	Child w/Disabilities	2	(count the "CD"s circled)
	Typ. Dev. Child	1	(count the "TDC"s circled)

Comments: Mary needs help in responding to LKD's initiations; however, she seems comfortable with her buddy's company.

situations, or they may be unsure of what is expected of them. In addition, children with disabilities may be unskilled at responding appropriately, or may not have skills to initiate an interaction with their buddies. First trials typically require some refinement. This means some additional teaching is usually necessary to help buddy pairs resolve remaining social and communication difficulties.

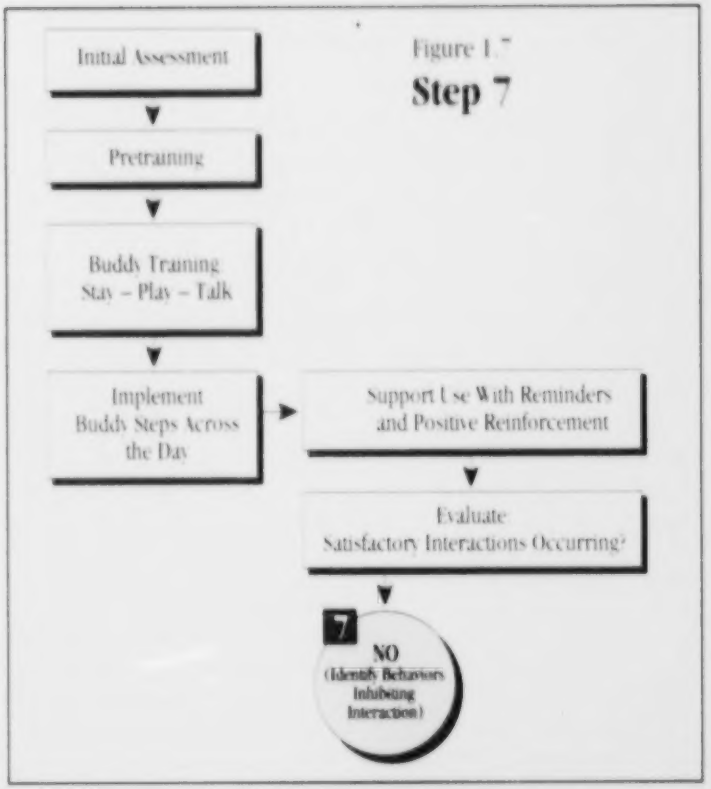


Figure 1.7
Step 7

Strategies

Based on observations, the teacher will identify a behavior that requires remediation to improve the quality of the pair's interaction.

Behaviors that serve to inhibit satisfactory interactions are fairly recognizable. Examples include:

- The child with a disability (buddy partner) pushes a toy toward the trained buddy, who does not notice the gesture.
- The trained buddy talks nonstop but does not actually engage the buddy partner in play.
- The buddy partner asks for help but gets no response and then does not repeat the attempt.
- The trained buddy asks a question but does not give the buddy partner time to respond.
- The trained buddy asks a question, but the buddy partner does not realize a response was expected.
- The buddy partner responds nonverbally to the trained buddy, who does not recognize it as a response.
- The buddy partner is not used to the trained buddy's attention and resists passively or aggressively.
- The trained buddy continually tells the buddy partner what to do.
- The buddy partner uses inappropriate verbalizations or physical aggression instead of asking to share or play with the trained buddy.

When several interfering behaviors are observed, you will need to prioritize them to determine your next course of action. First identify all behaviors that are in any way hurtful

or antagonistic. These are top priority. For second priority, identify one behavior that seems consistently and primarily to interfere with pair interaction. For remedial action, move on to step 8.

Self Check

1. Describe three interfering behaviors you see in your class.

Step 8: Identify a Social Skill

Objectives

Teachers will identify an appropriate social or communicative skill needed to improve the interaction between the trained buddy and the buddy partner.

Rationale

Additional teaching will be necessary to help the pair improve the quality of their interactions. Working on one new social skill at a time and working with the pair together conveys the message that friendship is a mutual responsibility, and that each participant is expected to provide reciprocal support to the other's efforts.

Strategies

Based on observations of the pair's interactions, the teacher will identify a communicative or social behavior that should improve the quality of the pair's interactions.

Consider the examples of inhibiting behaviors listed in the previous section. The choice of social skill will develop from your own observations:

Breakdown: The buddy partner pushes a toy toward the trained buddy who does not notice the gesture.

New skill needed: The trained buddy needs to recognize that the buddy partner may use nonverbal communications. Focus on increased visual alertness.

Breakdown: The trained buddy talks nonstop but does not actually engage the buddy partner in play.

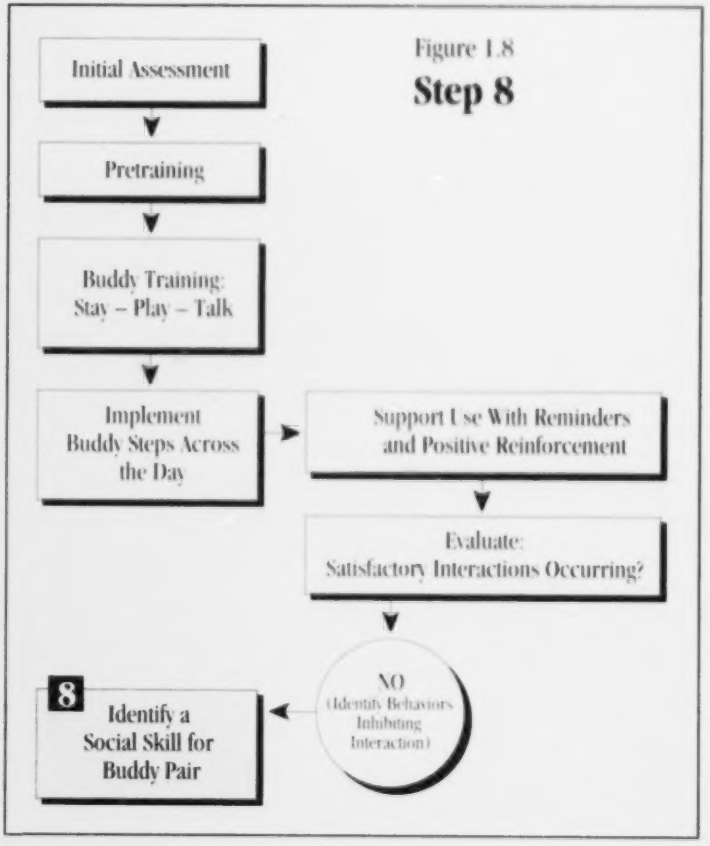

Initial Assessment
Pretraining
Buddy Training: Stay – Play – Talk
Implement Buddy Steps Across the Day
Support Use With Reminders and Positive Reinforcement
Evaluate: Satisfactory Interactions Occurring?
NO (Identify Behaviors Inhibiting Interaction)
8
Identify a Social Skill for Buddy Pair

Figure 1.8
Step 8

New skill needed: The trained buddy needs to recognize that talking with friends means "taking turns with talking" (as with sharing toys). The trained buddy needs to wait for responses and watch the buddy partner for nonverbal communication.

Breakdown: The buddy partner asks for help but gets no response and then does not repeat the attempt.

New skill needed: The buddy partner needs encouragement to "keep trying" and to learn some attention-getting strategies: tapping the trained buddy's arm, looking at the buddy's face, signing "please" or "help."

Breakdown: The trained buddy asks a question but does not give the buddy partner time to respond.

New skill needed: The trained buddy needs to recognize that there is no need to rush when communicating with his or her buddy partner; waiting a bit will give the partner time needed to respond.

Additional social skills will be identified as appropriate to the unique interactions of the buddy pair. The following section will describe how to train social skills to the buddy pair.

Self Check

Consider the following examples of breakdowns in social interactions. What would you consider to be an appropriate skill to help the trained buddy and the buddy partner improve the quality of their interactions?

1. *Breakdown:* The trained buddy asks a question, but the buddy partner does not realize a response was expected.

   Social skill needed:

2. *Breakdown:* The buddy partner responds nonverbally to the trained buddy who does not recognize it as a response.

   Social skill needed:

3. *Breakdown:* The buddy partner is not used to the trained buddy's attention and resists, either passively or aggressively.

   Social skill needed:

Step 9: Train Buddy Pair

Objectives

To both the trained buddy and the buddy partner, *teachers* will teach an appropriate social skill customized to the unique interactions of the buddy pair, to further enhance the reciprocity of the interactions.

Students will learn to adapt or modify a social or communicative behavior in order to improve the quality of interaction with their buddies.

Rationale

With this training cycle, both the trained buddy and the buddy partner can add to their individual repertoires of social skills. This new phase of shared training (i.e., including the child with a disability in social-skills training) helps the buddy pair develop a common repertoire of social-communication skills. These common repertoires and shared experiences are designed to enhance social interactions.

Strategies

Up to this point, buddy training has been directed toward typically developing children. From this point on in the training sequence, we recommend that the child with a disability be included in buddy training. When the pair is trained together, each child learns and shares responsibility for the other's new social skill. Conduct this training across the day in various activities and continue over several days, until you feel the new skill is established.

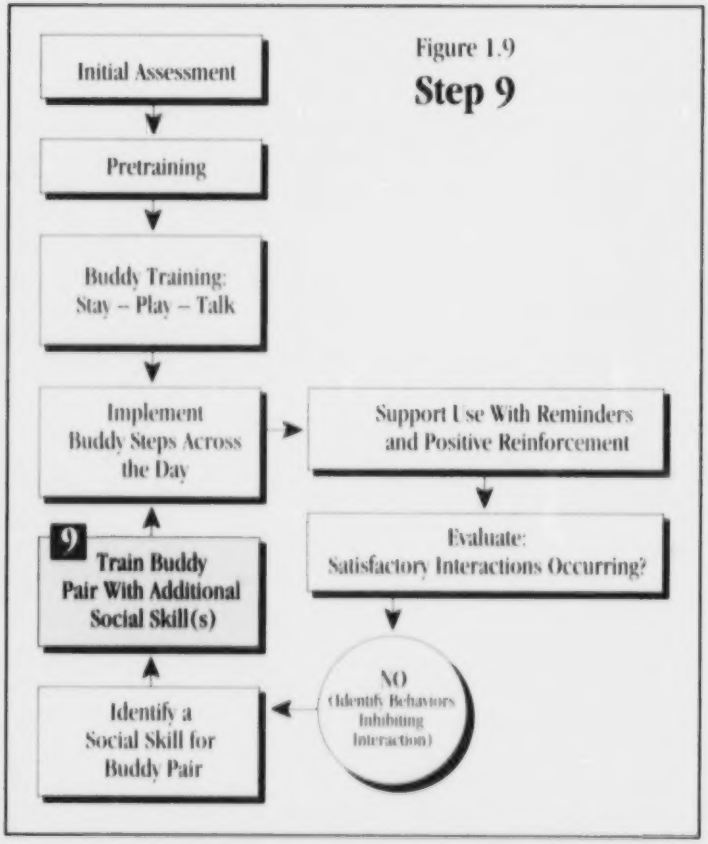


Figure 1.9

Step 9

If the breakdown is *inattention* to *nonverbal communications*, you might unobtrusively participate in their play and point out when a nonverbal gesture occurs; ask the trained buddy or buddy partner if he or she observed it and reinforce for watching and responding appropriately.

If the breakdown is *nonreciprocated communication*, help the trained buddy or the buddy partner to practice asking a question. Then demonstrate how to wait and watch for a response. Initially reinforce every communicative turn-taking behavior and fade reinforcement as turn-taking is maintained.

The trained buddy or buddy partner may need to try different questioning techniques. For example, ask one question at a time; use the buddy's name; use a visual cue when asking (pointing, picking up a toy); or tap an arm to get the buddy's attention. Reinforce the pair for practicing a variety of questioning strategies.

If the breakdown is *resistance to play suggestions*, remind the pair that both of them are learning to be friends and both of them will try to play together, share, etc. Then both children are reinforced when they share a play activity.

Once the new skill is firmly established, proceed as before, by (1) reminding the pair to use their new social skill across the day; (2) supporting the use of the social skill with prompts and reinforcements; and (3) conducting a series of observations to evaluate effectiveness.

Self Check

1. What is the purpose of training the buddy pair together?
2. How would you teach the buddy pair to address the following:
   a. unintelligible speech by the child with a disability?
   b. unclear intent by the child with a disability?

c. overuse of questions by the trained buddy?

d. nonstop and/or one-way conversation by the trained buddy?

Step 10: Satisfactory Interaction Occurring

Objectives

Teachers will determine that the relationship between the trained buddy and buddy partner has developed into a friendship. The teachers will judge that interactions between both buddies are positive and reciprocal.

Students will demonstrate a relationship that is mutually enjoyable and satisfying. Communication and play behaviors between the buddies are understood and responded to in an appropriate manner.

Rationale

The goal of buddy training is to promote both sensitivity and specific skills that will facilitate friendships in an integrated preschool classroom. After you have trained typically developing children and then included children with disabilities in buddy skills training, buddy pairs practice the three buddy steps and other individualized social skills, to recognize and repair behaviors that inhibit social interactions. Over time, a mutually satisfying relationship should be observable.

Strategies

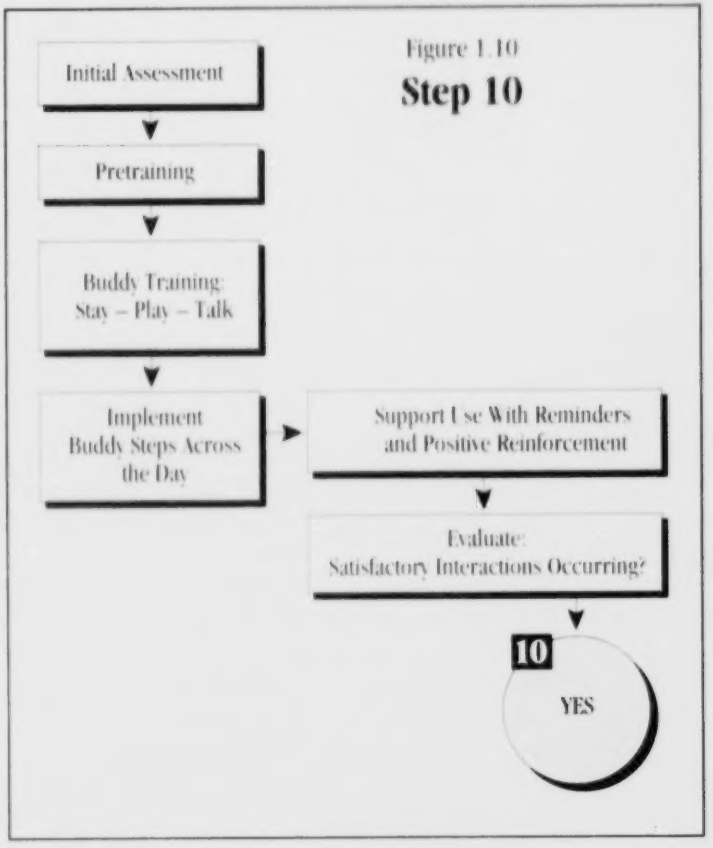
After cycling through the training procedures for both buddies (steps 4 through 9), the teacher will determine whether the quality and quantity of the pair's interactions are mutually satisfying.

Mutually satisfying interactions exhibit behaviors such as sharing, taking turns, and understanding each other's communicative intents. These behaviors replace behaviors that initially inhibited satisfactory interactions.

Regarding the *quality* of the interactions, the teacher should be able to answer the following questions in the affirmative:

Figure 1.10

Step 10



- Has a reciprocity developed in the buddy pair's abilities to accommodate to each other's communication levels?
- Are the types of interactions desirable?
- Do the interactions suggest that the two children enjoy each other's company?
- Has there been a generalization of the buddy skills? That is, have you observed positive interactions between the trained buddy and the buddy partner in activities apart from the three selected for buddy play (transition times, etc.)? Have you observed an increase in interactions between the child with a disability and other classmates?

In addition, consider the *quantity* of the interactions. By collecting information with a tracking chart, you should be able to observe that the number of interactions between the trained buddy and the buddy partner are at or near the level of interactions observed between the trained buddy and other children from the Initial Assessment (step 1).

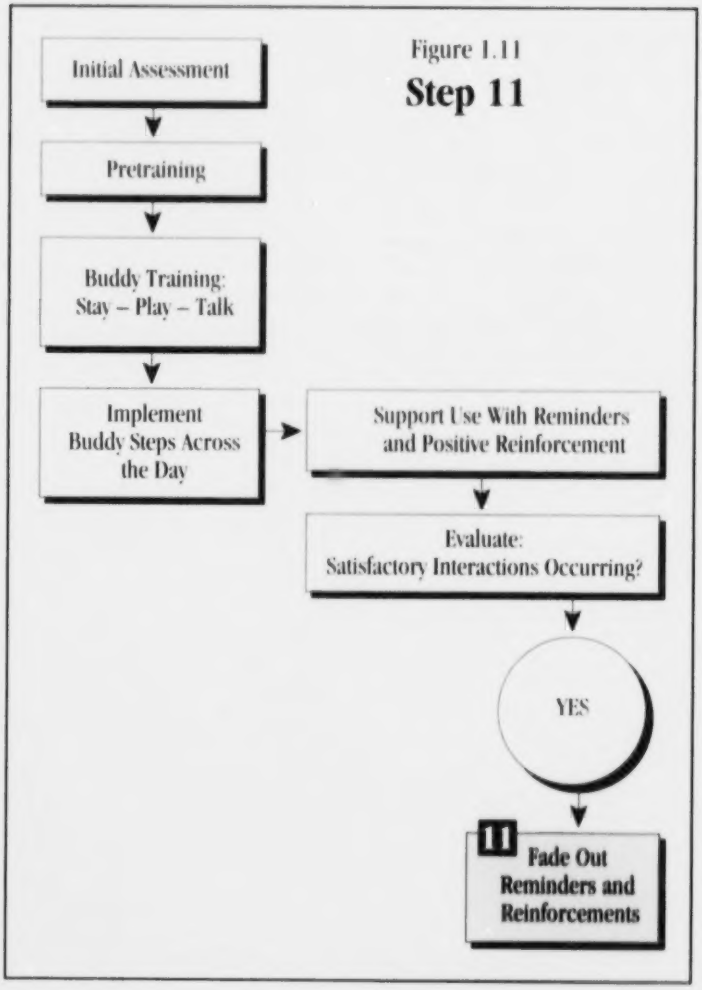


Figure 1.11

Step 11

Self Check

1. How will you determine that the buddy training has been implemented fully?
2. How will you determine if there has been a generalization of the buddy skills?

Step 11: Fade Out Reminders and Reinforcements

Objectives

Teachers will know when to allow reminders to be faded. Any contrived reinforcers will be provided to children less frequently, allowing natural social reinforcers to take over.

Students will find buddy interactions to be rewarding for their intrinsic merit and will rely less on adult intervention.

Rationale

The purpose of buddy training is to facilitate interactions among preschoolers who have different social and communication abilities. When children develop a shared repertoire of play activities and communication strategies, the "costs" of relationship development do not need continuous support from adult reminders and contrived reinforcement.

Strategies

The teacher will recognize when to fade reminders to the buddy pair to "stay, play, and talk" or to practice individualized buddy skills. Reduce the use of reinforcers as the buddy pair begins to obtain intrinsic reward in the quality of its interactions.

Initially, teachers give reminders at the beginning of each activity and during the activity as needed. Token reinforcers (such as stickers or stamps) and social reinforcers (praise) are also provided at the end of each activity. Token reinforcers are soon fully replaced by praise.

If described as a schedule, this "fading out" process might look something like that shown in Figure 7.

As indicated by the nondescript labels of week A, week B, etc., the time frame suggests that the use and fading out of reminders and reinforcers are highly dependent upon the teacher's observations, evaluations, and modifications of the buddy skills training as necessary for each classroom.

Self Check

1. How will you plan to reduce reminders to the buddy pair to interact?
2. How will you stretch the schedule for reinforcers?

Figure 7

Sample Schedule for Reminders and Reinforcers

	REMINDERS			REINFORCERS		
	Act. #1	Act. #2	Act. #3	Act. #1	Act. #2	Act. #3
Week A	X	X	X	TR	TR	TR
Week B	X	X	X	SR	TR	TR
Week C	X	X		SR	SR	TR
Week D	X			SR	SR	SR

Act. = activities across the day
TR = token reinforcers (stickers, stamps)
SR = social reinforcers (praise)

CHAPTER THREE

ase Study

Mrs. B was concerned because Kari rarely interacted with the other children in the class.

Kari, a 4-year-old with Down syndrome, was enrolled in Mrs. B's preschool class, which consisted of 18 children, 6 with moderate disabilities and 12 typically developing children. Mrs. B was concerned because Kari rarely interacted with the other children in the class. Mrs. B took turns with the paraeducator and a student teacher over the course of several weeks collecting three 4-minute samples of interaction assessment data per day for Kari and three typically developing children in the class. Observations of Kari during such activities as playtime, snack time, and activity time indicated a range of zero to two interactions with classmates per 4-minute sample. The assessment also demonstrated that Kari was more likely to interact with the adults in the classroom than with other children (see Figure 8).

The assessments of the typically developing children revealed that they exhibited 3 to 25 communicative acts with classmates during 4-minute observations. These children had significantly fewer interactions with adults than did Kari. For example, Josie, a 4-year-old typically developing child and a potential buddy for Kari, interacted with classmates 8 to 15 times per 4-minute sample taken across several days (see Figure 9).

Josie seemed to be a particularly good choice to be Kari's buddy, because the children were the same age and gender and both seemed to spend a lot of time in the dramatic play corner, although

Figure 8

Tracking Social Interaction: Example (Kari)

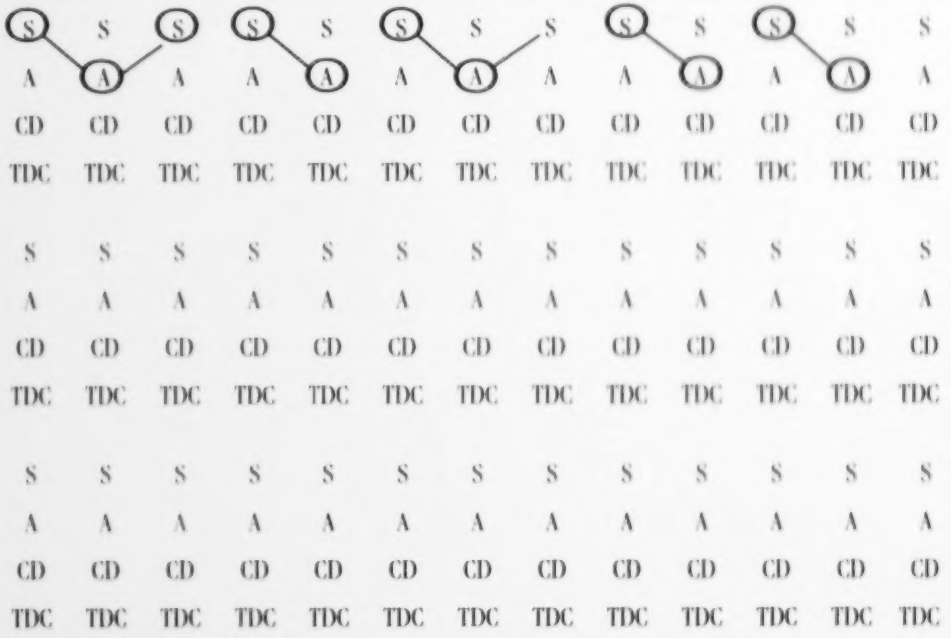
Child's name (subject): Kari Date: 9/20 Length of Observation: 4 min.

Check one: ☑ Pre ☐ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: 9:00 am

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.



Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)			
	Subject	6	(count the "S"s circled)
	Adult	5	(count the "A"s circled)
	Child w/Disabilities	0	(count the "CD"s circled)
	Typ. Dev. Child	0	(count the "TDC"s circled)

Comments: Kari watches other children & on occasion approaches a play group, but her interest in playing is not noticed by others.

Figure 9

Tracking Social Interaction: Example (Josie)

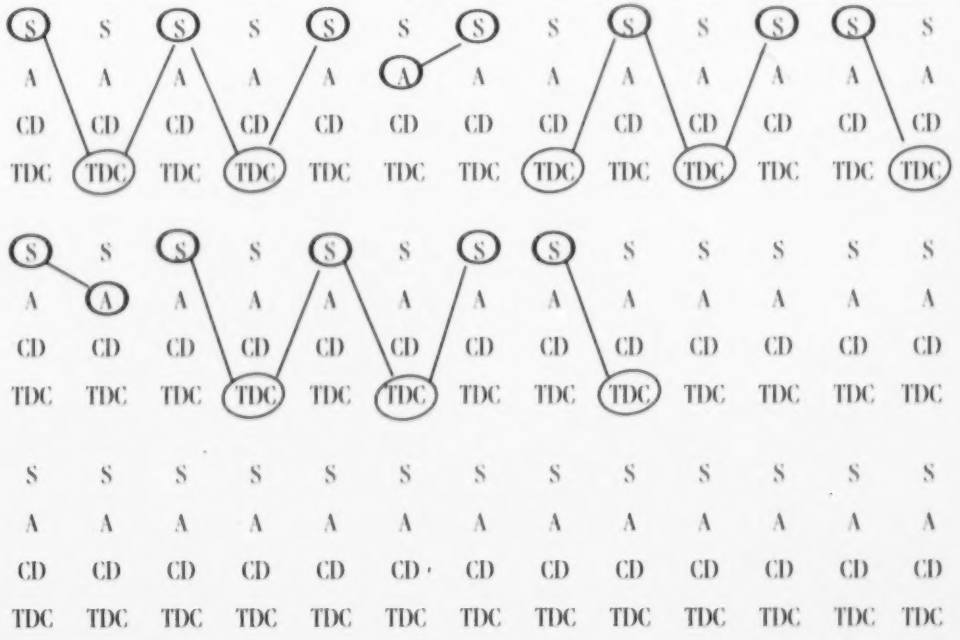
Child's name (subject): Josie Date: 10/4 Length of Observation: 4 min.

Check one: ☑ Pre ☐ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: 10:00 am

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.



Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)			
	Subject	12	(count the "S"s circled)
	Adult	2	(count the "A"s circled)
	Child w/Disabilities	0	(count the "CD"s circled)
	Typ. Dev. Child	8	(count the "TDC"s circled)

Comments: Josie likes to play w/blocks, puzzles, kitchen. Kari spends a great deal of time in kitchen as well.

Kari spent most of her time there watching the other children or playing on her own. Josie had also been noted for her maturity and kindness toward other children.

Mrs. B selected a Monday to conduct buddy training with the 12 typically developing children, which included a sensitization session and two training sessions of the three buddy steps (stay, play, and talk with your buddy). At the end of each session, children received a sticker and praise for their participation.

Because Mrs. B. and her staff felt they wanted to begin the application of the buddy project slowly, they decided to assign only one ongoing buddy pair. When it was clear that this first pair was well established, they would assign a second pair and somewhat later a third pair.

Josie and Kari were assigned as the first buddy pair. The staff's goal was to increase Kari's interactions with Josie to the approximate range that Josie had demonstrated with other children. On the first morning, Mrs. B reviewed the three buddy steps with Josie and asked her to use the buddy steps "for just a few minutes" during free play.

Josie approached Kari, said hi, and sat down at the table where Kari had been coloring. Josie watched for a while, then asked if she could color, too. Kari did not make eye contact but did nod her head once. As she colored Josie talked about the pumpkin shapes, the light and dark orange colors, and the jack-o-lantern her father had carved the day before. (Like many buddies, Josie had an initial tendency to comment without watching for cues to her buddy's efforts to interact. If this pattern continued, Mrs. B would identify a social skill to teach the buddy pair [step 8]—increase the reciprocity of their interactions: watch, ask questions, respond to questions, etc.)

Because the staff was interested in minimizing the demand for Josie's cooperation, Mrs. B gave her an "okay" or "thumb's up" signal after 3 or 4 minutes to indicate that her buddy time was done; she was then free to choose to continue playing with her buddy or move to another activity. Before free play was over, Josie received a sticker to attach to a sheet that would go home with her when 10 spaces were filled. Later that day, Josie was also asked to "be a buddy" for 3 minutes during snack time, and 3 minutes during small-group activities (across-the-day intervention).

Each day Josie was asked to be Kari's buddy for 3 to 4 minutes during three classroom activities. Initially, Mrs. B reviewed the buddy steps every day and gave a sticker after every session (three times a day). These prompts and token reinforcements were faded gradually and replaced by social reinforcements—praise.

For the next 2 weeks, the interaction between Kari and Josie continued to be monitored and refined. For example, although Josie consistently "stayed" with Kari when asked, she appeared discouraged because Kari moved so frequently and rapidly from one activity to another. As a result, Mrs. B trained the pair together to "stay" at one activity for 4 minutes and rewarded both Kari and Josie with stickers for meeting this goal.

Over the course of 18 days, Kari's social interactions increased, ranging from 6 to 12 interactions per 4-minute sample (see Figure 10). This rate of interaction approximated the rate observed with Josie and her typically developing classmates. To test generalization, on the 19th day the classroom staff assigned another trained buddy (not Josie) to be a buddy with Kari. Kari interacted with this new buddy an average of eight times in 4 minutes, still markedly higher than her initial levels.

Figure 10

Tracking Social Interaction: Example (Kari–2)

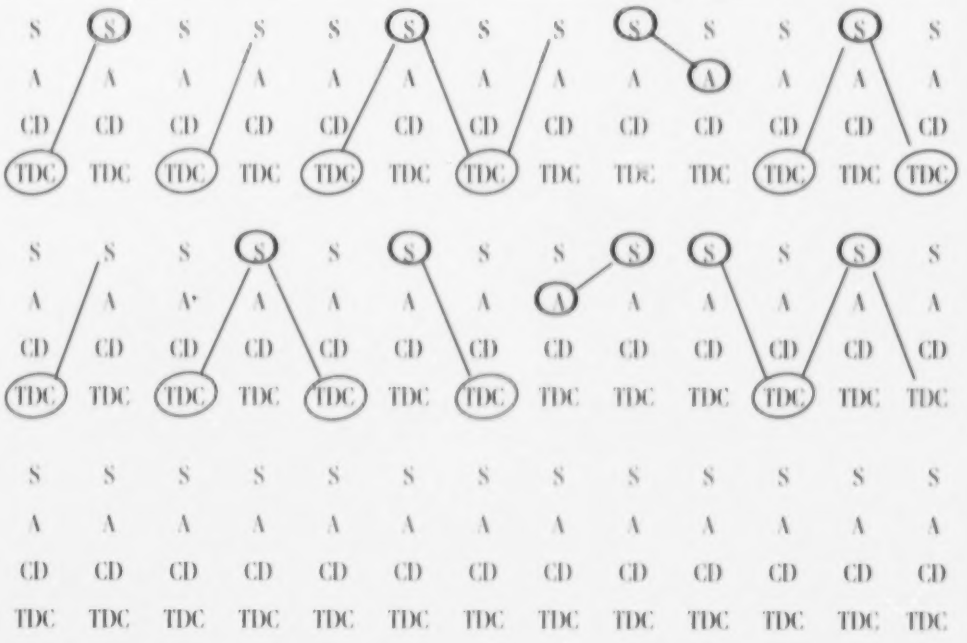
Child's name (subject): Kari Date: 11/6 Length of Observation: 4 min.

Check one: ☐ Pre ☑ Post Buddy Skills Training Time: 2:00 pm

S = Subject A = Adult CD = Child with Disability TDC = Typically Developing Child

Directions:

1. To track *who* initiated a verbal or nonverbal social interaction *or* responded (verbally or nonverbally), circle the person's code letter. Each S-A-CD-TDC column represents one interaction.
2. To track the subject of any initiation, draw a line between the initiator and the subject in two adjoining columns.



Total # of interactions: (initiations + responses)			
	Subject	9	(count the "S"s circled)
	Adult	2	(count the "A"s circled)
	Child w/Disabilities	0	(count the "CD"s circled)
	Typ. Dev. Child	11	(count the "TDC"s circled)

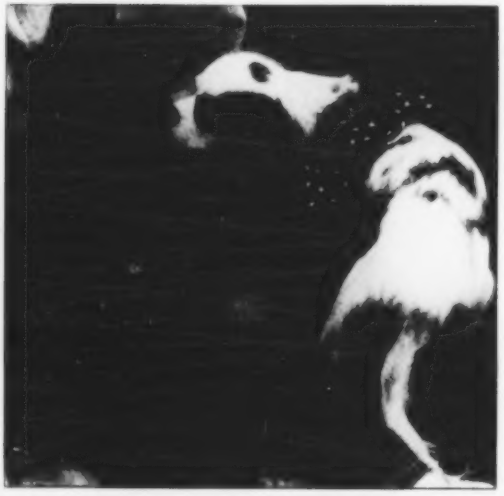
Comments: Kari is learning to touch Josie's arm when she wants to share a toy. Josie has learned to look at Kari, ask her to play, & talk about play activities. The pair is often seen together outside in the sandbox.

The staff noted many anecdotes to indicate that Josie had come to enjoy Kari's company, seeking her out as a partner in line, and sitting next to her in a variety of activities, not just those in which she was assigned to be a buddy. Mrs. B and her staff decided that they liked the effects of the buddy program and implemented it with two other pairs. At the end of the year, they concluded that the buddy skills training program was successful for two reasons. (1) The stay, play, talk strategies were consistent with typical play repertoires of preschool children. (2) Spreading strategy use across the day was less demanding than intensive use during one daily playtime and produced more widespread generalization.

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary

Facilitating friendships should not be thought of as a short-term process.



The buddy skills training program provides teachers with a set of tested strategies designed to facilitate interactions and support the development of friendships between preschoolers with disabilities and without disabilities. The three buddy steps are consistent with conventional classroom instruction and are easy for most preschoolers to learn. The buddy skills program supports relationship development by acknowledging the likely "costs" or effort involved, and by attempting to reduce those costs with sensitization training and specific skill training at a level that preschoolers understand, and that teachers can easily incorporate into classroom instruction.

Facilitating friendships should not be thought of as a short-term process, but rather one that is integrated into the curriculum throughout the full school year. As with any new approach, a certain amount of time is needed to learn the strategy and then teach these buddy skills to children. Yet these training procedures are easy to learn and to carry out, allowing teachers to quickly incorporate the procedure into their existing teaching strategies.

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